



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2009

4:00 – 6:00 PM

COMMISSION BOARDROOM

MINUTES

Commissioners

Anne Ashmore-Hudson, Chair
Rhona Wolfe Freidman
Marvin Bowser
Rebecca Fishman
Rogelio A. Maxwell
Michael R. Sonnenreich
Lavinia Wohlfarth

Staff

Gloria Nauden, Executive Director
Catherine Cleary, Dir. Grants & Leg. Affairs
Moshe Adams, Legislative & Grants Manager
Ebony Blanks, Program Coordinator
Victoria Joy Murray, Program Coordinator

I. Call to Order

The Chair, Dr. Anne Ashmore-Hudson, called the meeting to order at 4:05.

II. Approval of Minutes

The Chair asked the Commission to review the minutes from the full Commission meeting on September 24, 2009.

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Bowser that the Commission approve the minutes as presented.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

III. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director, Gloria Nauden, presented the October ArtNews newsletter and the video spotlight on Art Enables. The Commissioner Friedman commended the Executive Director and the staff for the recent improvements to the website. Commissioner Friedman and the Chair asked to receive the arts in the news updates less frequently. The Director then distributed the announcements for the upcoming Art Salon on Thursday, October 29.

The new Deputy Director, Ayris Scales, was introduced by the Director. Commissioner Friedman welcomed Ms. Scales.

The Executive Director then noted that the first round of grant panels will be completed on Friday, October 23 when the Cultural Facilities Projects panel meets.

IV. Chair's Report

The Chair echoed Commissioner Friedman's commendation of the ArtNews newsletter and invited the Executive Committee members to introduce themselves to the new deputy director. She went on to highlight a recent Art Salon conducted on Florida Avenue and noted the upcoming evening at the Corcoran.

The Chair reported that she and the Director met with three individuals who are interested in the Office of the Poet Laureate and the plans for its future. The Chair recommended meeting as a working group to discuss the institutionalization of that Office and proposed reducing the term of the appointment to about three or four years. She noted that there are some feelings that the poet laureate should be a mid-level poet who could be boosted by serving in the position, but her belief is that the office should be filled by an established poet who can provide the highest caliber of service through poetry. Commissioner Wohlfarth commented that not many people in the poetry community fully understand the activities that the Poet Laureate already conducts.

The Chair also described the recent reception for Maurice Hines at the Arena Stage and the meet-and-greet at the Lincoln Theater and mentioned the reception held by the Humanities Council and the NAACP.

The Chair invited the Vice Chair to present a report on arts education. Commissioner Friedman, along with other members of the Arts Education Task Force went before the State Board of Education on October 21 to present an arts education policy and why such a policy is necessary. She quoted First Lady Michelle Obama and a finding in a recent report by the Center for Arts Education that high schools with the highest graduation rates are high schools that offer arts education. The Vice Chair noted that while it was appropriate to testify before the State Board of Education, the Task Force must approach Chancellor Rhee and DCPS to adopt the policy

The Director added new information about the activation of dormant retail space through the arts, as demonstrated by the Windows on Washington project at the Convention Center.

Commissioner Maxwell noted his recent performance at the Convention Center as part of the Green Festival.

V. Poet Laureate's Report

The Poet Laureate was ill and unable to attend.

VI. East of the River Program

Ebony Blanks, Arts Program Coordinator, introduced the panel representative, Karin Edgett. Ms. Edgett presented the funding and policy recommendations. Ms. Edgett noted the total amount of the requests and stated that the panel recommended awards totaling \$149,986.25. She commented that there were several applications that were worthy but that the panel could not recommend a grant for all of them due to lack of funding. Ms. Edgett noted that the panel's primary recommendation is that the Commission develop two separate applications for the two separate categories. The Vice Chair thanked Ms. Edgett for her help. Commissioner Bowser added that it was a strong panel and the panelists were very considerate. Commissioner Friedman asked if an applicant's funding status in one category affected its status in the other. Ms. Edgett responded that it did not and a conversation ensued about how funds in this program should be distributed. Commissioner Friedman noted that the process was conducted correctly but that she would prefer that it be taken into account. Commissioner Bowser stated that one way to do that would be to separate the grant into two different programs. It was added that a stipulation would need to be added that the applicants would have to choose between the two categories.

The Chair commented that the Committee must vote based on what the panel recommended and that the issue should be revisited at the policy meeting November.

Policy Recommendations

1. There should be two separate applications when applying for more than one category.
2. The question should be asked how does the organization impact ward 7 and 8 specifically and also how do they impact the overall community.
3. The cover of the application should ask for total project budget on the APA category and then total organizational budget on MSA category.
4. The project budget should say project income and revenue on the right side to match the left side which says total project expenses.
5. Suggest that theater applicants give a brief description of the plays that they are planning to perform.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Maxwell that the Commissioners approve the \$149,986.00 in funding recommendations as presented.

*Motion Carried

*4 in favor; 1 abstention

It was moved by Commissioner Wohlfarth and seconded by Commissioner Maxwell that the funding status issue be reviewed at the November meeting.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

VIII. Artist Fellowship Program – Literary Arts

Grants and Legislative Affairs Manager, Moshe Adams, introduced Goldie Patrick Deane, the panel representative. She presented the panel's funding and policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

1. Inter-disciplinary artists who provide a literary work sample and apply for the Artist Fellowship Program – Literature be required to provide specific sections of their work for the panel to review instead of long samples of several books.

Discussion

Commissioner Friedman commented that the recommendations are very strong and appropriate. Commissioner Wohlfarth asked the panel representative to provide more detail on the Living Legends recommendation.

Ms. Deane provided an overview of the activities of Words, Beats and Life and answered questions about the content standards that the program addresses. The Chair asked Ms. Deane how she would define hip hop and she responded that it is a non-codified language that is understood by a particular generation. The Chair asked how it can be translated if it is non-codified and Ms. Deane responded that what Words, Beats and Life wants to do is codify the utilization of that language to reinforce standard curricular learning.

The Vice Chair asked which wards of the District are reached by Words, Beats and Life reaches and Ms. Deane explained their reach.

Commissioner Maxwell commended the staff for the strong execution of the panel

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Fishman that the Commission approve the \$50,000.00 in funding recommendations as presented.

Motion Carried

*Unanimous

IX. Grants-In-Aid

Victoria Murray, Arts Program Coordinator, introduced Carol Foster and Jonathan Willen, the panel representatives. Ms. Foster noted that there are a great number of meritorious organizations that the panel would have liked to fund but there was a limited amount of funding available. Mr. Willen identified the organizations that were declared ineligible. Ms. Foster explained the process through which the panel allocated the funds.

Policy Recommendations

1. The panel recommends the Commission add a line item in the budget that includes in-kind contributions.
2. The panel recommends the Commission separate the applicants into cohorts based on their annual budget to even the playing field.
3. The panel recommends the Commission reevaluate the time commitment for the panelists. The volume of applications is too high to fairly assess in the allotted two day period.

Discussion

The Chair asked the panel representatives if they could help the Commission determine how to evaluate the value of in-kind contributions. The Director asked if the in-kind contribution should be counted toward the match and Mr. Willen replied that it should.

Ms. Foster noted that she had a recommendation that did not make it on the record that potential applicants should submit a letter of intent to apply—this could greatly assist the grass roots organizations in managing the time investment in the process.

Mr. Willen explained the panelists' third recommendation and stated that the panels should have more time to review such a large volume of applications. He added that this would support the panelists' second recommendation that cohorts should be developed based on the applicants' operating budgets.

The Chair asked if the panel representatives had an immediate suggestion and Mr. Willen reiterated that the program should be broken into cohorts. She clarified that she wanted to know if he felt that the panel was invalid and stated that he did not. She then commended the panelists for stretching the funding as far as they did. Ms. Foster added that it would be helpful to have a group of seasoned artists to convene to identify immediate needs in the community and to use that feedback to develop new guidelines for the Commission's grant programs.

Discussion

The Vice Chair stated that the panelists need to read the applications in advance and not get so bogged down in conversation during the meeting—there is no need for a three-day panel. Commissioner Maxwell responded that the panel did read the applications and that they were very sharp. He added that they may have spent too much time recapping the applications instead of deliberating. A discussion on the roles of the primary and secondary readers ensued.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Bowser and seconded by Commissioner Wohlfarth that the \$713,880 in funding recommendations be approved as recommended.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

X. 14th and Girard Public Art Project – Design Presentation

Deirdre Ehlen introduced the project at 14th and Girard Public Art Project featuring Peter Krsko from Albus Cavus and Mazi Mutafa from Words, Beats and Life Inc. Design sketches were passed out to the Executive Committee. Mr. Mutafa explained the mural in detail. The Chair asked if any of the elders who use the park would be invited to assist in painting the mural. Mr. Mutafa replied that the elders were consulted and asked to participate. Ms. Ehlen and Mr. Mutafa were told that the elders did not want to participate. Mr. Krsko added that the intergenerational dynamics of the artwork and symbolism. The Vice Chair asked how the mural would be protected from graffiti. Ms. Ehlen replied that a clear protective coat will be applied to the mural. The Vice Chair then emphasized that all artistic suggestions that originated from the community be considered in the final design, should they arise. The Vice Chair encouraged Ms. Ehlen to contact the Executive Committee with any revisions

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Fishman that the Commission approve design as is unless there is an important change in design with suggestion to incorporate suggestions.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:08PM